

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 056037
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO WHITE HOUSE PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 056037

NODIS

FOR DR BRZEZINSKI ONLY

FOL TEL SENT ACTION SECSTATE FROM DAMASCUS DTD 13 MAR 7 DTG

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S E C R E T DAMASCUS 1649

NODIS

FOR SECRETARY FROM MURPHY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SY, US

SUBJECT: CARTER-ASAD MEETING

1. AFTER DISCUSSION HIS OWN VISIT TO WASHINGTON AS OUTLINED
STATE 56009, KHADDAM ASKED IF USG HAD REACHED ANY CONCLUSION
RE TIME AND PLACE FOR CARTER-ASAD MEETING. REPLIED I HAD
NO INFORMATION ON THIS.

2. KHADDAM THEN SAID THAT SARG UNDERSTOOD PRESIDENT CARTER
HAD BEEN INVITED TO VISIT RUMANIA. "WOULD THE US SIDE SEE

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IT POSSIBLE TO HAVE THE TWO PRESIDENTS MEET IN BUCHAREST?"
HE NOTED THAT THIS WAS "NOT (RPT NOT) A BLACK AND WHITE
SITUATION AND ASAD WAS OF COURSE NOT INSISTING ON
BUCHAREST AS A MEETING SITE."

3. KHADDAM ASKED I RELAY THIS AS SYRIAN SUGGESTION.
I PROMISED REPLY ASAP.

4. COMMENT. UK EMBOFF TOLD US YESTERDAY THAT PRIMIN
CALLAGHAN HAD JUST EXTENDED INVITATION TO ASAD TO VISIT
LONDON IN EARLY JUNE. ARRIVAL DATE PROPOSED WAS FOR THE DAY
BETWEEN THE ENDING OF THE ECONOMIC SUMMIT AND OPENING OF
THE NATO MEETING WHICH PRESIDENT CARTER HAS ANNOUNCED HE WILL
ATTEND. KHADDAM MADE NO REFERENCE TO CALLAGHAN INVITATION
BUT I SUSPECT HE ASSUMES BRITISH INVITATION WAS FIRST STEP IN
ARRANGING ASAD-CARTER MEETING IN LONDON.

5. ALTHOUGH SITUATION MAY NOT RPT NOT BE "BLACK AND WHITE",
TO USE KHADDAM'S WORDING, THE MESSAGE COMES THROUGH CLEARLY
THAT ASAD WOULD FIND IT AWKWARD TO CONTEMPLATE VISITING
LONDON AT THAT TIME. HE WOULD PROBABLY SEE IT AS GETTING TOO
TARRED WITH THE WESTERN BRUSH, PARTICULARLY THAT OF NATO.

6. ON THE OTHER HAND, ASAD IS A PERENNIAL, ALMOST CASUAL,
VISITOR TO BUCHAREST. HE MOST RECENTLY SAW CEAUCESCU
IN FEBRUARY. FOR ASAD BOTH BUCHAREST AND BELGRADE HAVE BEEN
COMFORTABLE HALF-WAY POINTS AT THIS STAGE IN SYRIA'S OWN OPENING
TO THE WEST. YOU WILL RECALL HIS ONLY PREVIOUS OFFICIAL
VISIT TO A WESTERN CAPITAL WAS TO PARIS IN JUNE 1976.
MURPHY
UNQTE VANCE

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